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Title: LINK BINGO ARRANGEMENT WITH MULTIPLE PLAY LOCATIONS ;

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**ABSTRACT:**

A link bingo arrangement comprises a random number generator 11 at a master location M. Selected numbers are converted to a code by means of an appropriate converter and transmitted through a modem 14 and telephone lines L to one or more remote play locations S. The number is also transmitted through the telephone lines via a microphone 17, to the or each play location where they are broadcast through an amplifier 19 and loud speaker system 20. The arrangement allows for errors in calling to be corrected.

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None

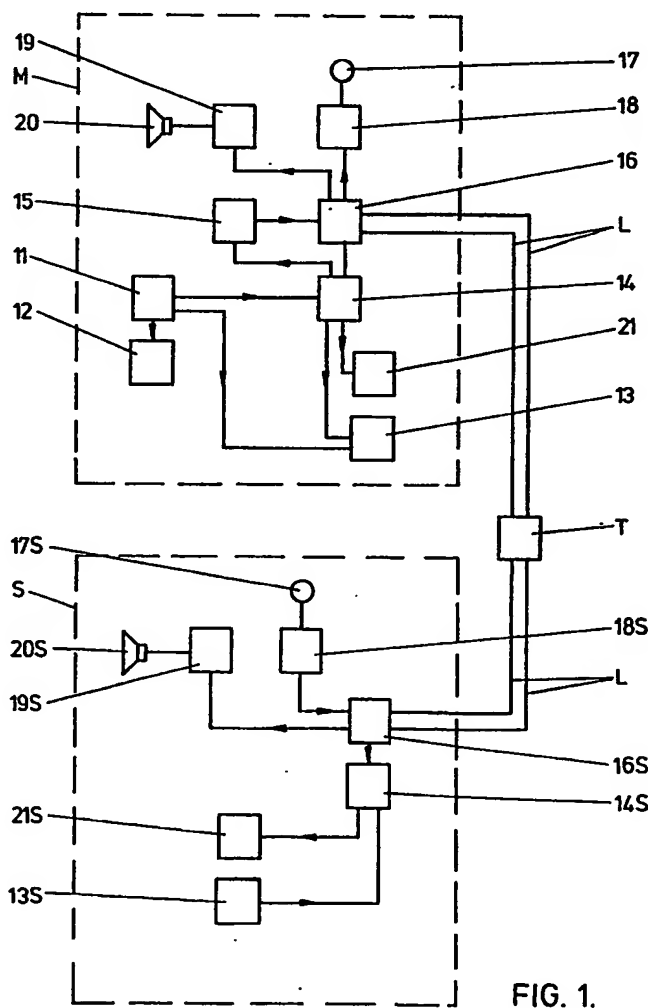
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(54) Link bingo arrangement with multiple play locations

(57) A link bingo arrangement comprises a random number generator 11 at a master location M. Selected numbers are converted to a code by means of an appropriate converter and transmitted through a modem 14 and telephone lines L to one or more remote play locations S. The number is also transmitted through the telephone lines via a microphone 17, to the or each play location where they are broadcast through an amplifier 19 and loud speaker system 20. The arrangement allows for errors in calling to be corrected.



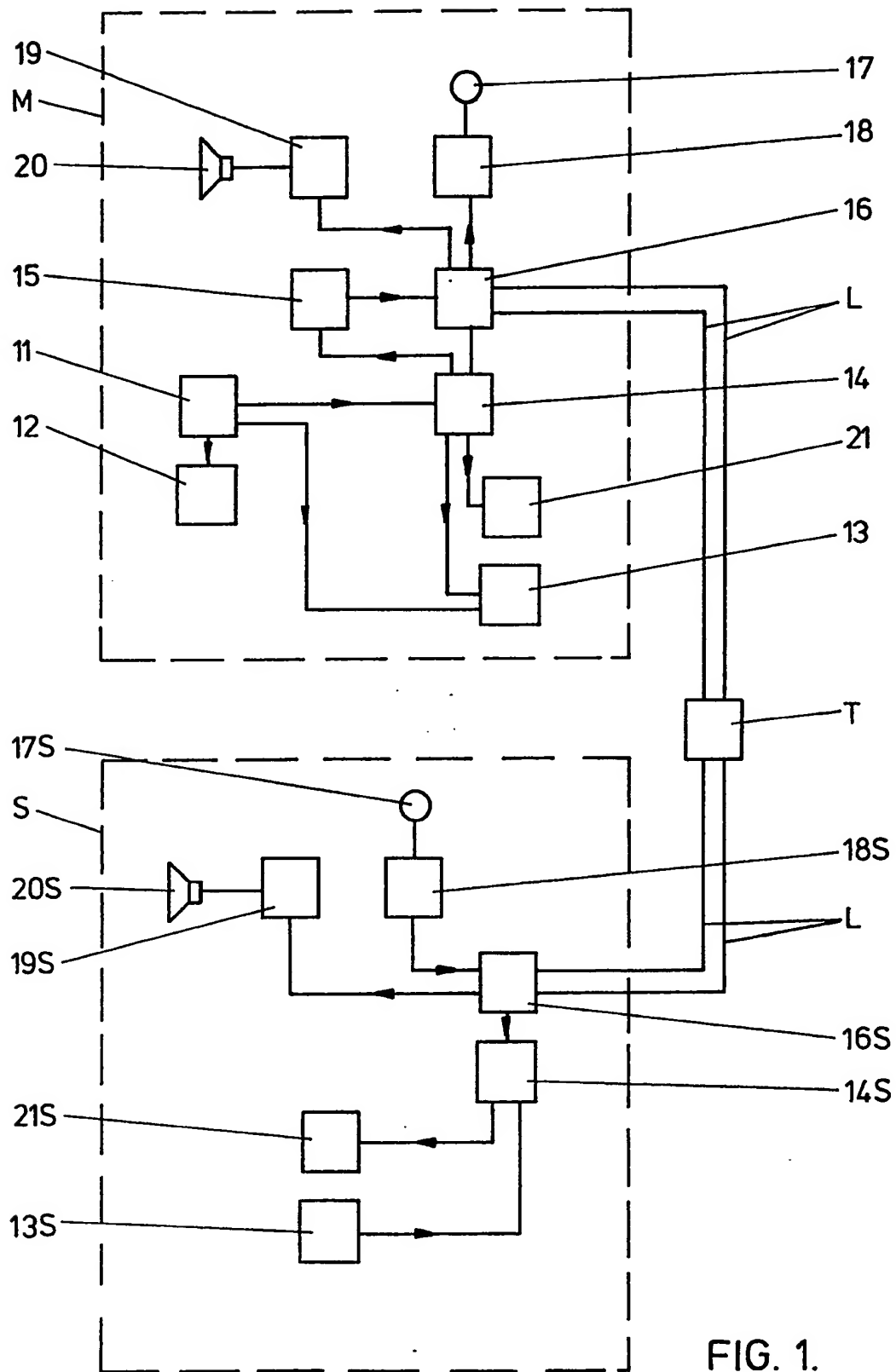


FIG. 1.

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"IMPROVEMENTS IN OR RELATING TO ELECTRICAL APPARATUS"

This invention relates to electrical apparatus and, more particularly, to electrical apparatus used in playing the game of "Bingo".

The game of Bingo is well known in the art and has been played for many years. In said game a number of players each have a card with a group of numbers individual to that card. By some random selection arrangement numbers between 1 and 100 are presented successively to a "caller" who calls each number as it is selected from the random selection and, on an agreed combination of numbers being called and which combination may, for example, be the four numbers closest to the corners of the card, a single line of numbers, or the full card, the holder of the card having the designated combination of called numbers is declared a winner and is awarded a prize.

In the early days the selection of random numbers was made by the caller drawing tiles, with numbers imprinted thereon, from a bag but in more recent years the game has grown in popularity and become more sophisticated and the random selection of numbers may now be made by an electronic device. Further, with the growth in popularity of the game, so called "link" Bingo allows a number of sites, each of which may have up to and frequently far more than 1,000 players, to be linked together to play their cards from a single selection of random numbers.

In current link Bingo arrangements the random selector is located in a "master" club in open telephone communication with its "slave" clubs. On the caller at the master club calling a number from the random selector, the voice of the master club caller is transmitted simultaneously to all the slave clubs, via the open telephone lines, and may be transmitted over a loud speaker system at the or each slave club. In an alternative arrangement the selected numbers are called by a caller at the master club and heard only by a second caller at the master club and, via the telephone link, simultaneously by all the slave callers so that each selected number is called simultaneously to all the players at the master club and at the slave clubs.

A further development in electronic bingo is in the provision of an electronic display board, which can be seen by all the players in any given club, and it is the practice for the caller at each club to enter each number on the display board immediately after the number is called, so that the participants can check their card continuously against the called number sequence.

The present system of link Bingo suffers from a number of severe problems, the master caller's voice transmission may be distorted by the telephone link to, or the loud speaker system at, one or more of the slave clubs and there may be problems with different dialects, any one of which may lead to one or more of the slave clubs falling out of sequence with the

remaining clubs and, without any facilities for checking back to the master unit, the fault would not be discovered unless a player at the slave unit called a winning combination which subsequently proved to be a false call.

The present invention seeks to provide a method of, and apparatus for, playing the game of link Bingo and which is more reliable than the present methods and apparatus.

According to the present invention there is provided a link bingo arrangement in which each random number, on being selected, is simultaneously transmitted verbally to all the play locations and is immediately thereafter transmitted to all the play locations as a coded transmission and, at each play location, the coded information is decoded and displayed to at least the caller at each play location.

Preferably the arrangement allows the caller at the master location to broadcast each called number simultaneously to all the play locations.

Preferably the coded information transmitted to each play location is decoded at each play location and displayed simultaneously on a display board at each play location, to be visible to all the players at that location.

Thus, in accordance with the present invention, each number on being randomly selected at the master location is transmitted to each and all of the play locations via two data transmission systems, the callers voice and a coded signal. The coded signal may conveniently comprise an analogue signal.

By this method, the caller at each play location has a check on each number called and the possibilities of any one or more clubs mishearing or misrepresenting a called number without an immediate correction are substantially eliminated.

Preferably both sets of signals, the verbal call and the coded data, are transmitted over the telephone lines from the master location to the other play locations.

In a preferred embodiment in accordance with the invention each number selected by the number generator is displayed on a caller visual display unit to the caller at the

master location and is simultaneously converted to its code signal and that signal is stored at the master play location. The caller at the master location calls the selected number with the telephone communication system to the other play locations set for the verbal transmission so that the called number is heard simultaneously by all the players, and immediately on finishing the verbal call, the caller sends the stored coded data indicative of the called number to all the other play locations where the said data is decoded and visually displayed at least the caller at each play location. The invention will now be described further by way of example with reference to the accompanying drawings in which the single figure shows, diagrammatically, a link bingo system comprising one master location or club and one other play location or slave clubs in accordance with the invention.

In the illustrated example all the apparatus within a master club is illustrated as within the broken line "M" and all the apparatus within a slave club is illustrated within the broken line "S".

In the example a conventional random number generator 11, at a master club "M", successively selects numbers from one to one hundred until a game is finished. As each number is generated the random number generator 11, transmits a signal indicative of that number to a caller visual display panel 12, at the master club M and simultaneously transmits data identifying that number to a card check system 13, which includes all the cards in play for that game.

The random number generator 11 also simultaneously sends a signal indicative of the number selected to a modem 14 which translates the said signal to a binary code signal and transmits the coded signal to a memory 15 ready for transmission to a voice data switch 16.

With the voice data switch 16 set for voice transmission the caller at the master club can read the last selected number from the visual display panel 12 and, using a microphone 17 through a preamp 18, "call" the number. The

signals from microphone 17 are extended to the voice data switch 16 and transmitted through the voice data switch 16 to an amplifier 19 and loud speaker system 20, so that the voice signals are broadcast to the players at the master club and, with the voice data switch 16, in its verbal mode the voice signals are simultaneously transmitted through the telephone exchange lines L and the telephone exchange T to a voice data switch 16S at the slave clubs.

At the slave clubs the voice signals are extended to an amplifier 19S and a speaker system 20S whereupon each number called by the caller at the master club is simultaneously broadcast to all the players at the master club and all the players at the slave club

The slave club S includes a microphone 17S, transmitting through a preamp 18S to the voice data switch 16S, so that the caller at the slave club S can, with the voice data system in the voice transmission mode, broadcast to the players at the slave club and, via voice data switch 16, simultaneously to the master club S.

Immediately after the caller at the master club M has called a number he, or she, will switch the voice data switch 16 to its coded data transmission mode. When the voice data switch 16 at the master club M has been switched to its coded data transmission mode the voice data switch 16S at the slave club is also switched to its coded signal receiving mode.

With the voice data switch 16 in the coded information transmission mode the coded signal stored in the memory 15 is transmitted through the voice data switch 16 and at the master club is transmitted back to the modem 14, where the signal is translated and a signal indicated of the coded number is extended to a club display panel 21 at the master club M, and which display panel will display all the numbers called up to that point in that specific game.

Simultaneously, and via the telephone lines L, the coded data is transmitted via the voice data switch 16 to the voice data switch 16S at the slave club, where said information



is directed to a modem 14S at the slave unit and is translated. The translated signal is extended by the modem 14S, to a card check 13S at the slave club S and, simultaneously, to a club display panel 21S at the slave unit and which display panel 20S will display all the numbers called up to that point in the specific game to all the players at the slave club.

Once the coded data in memory 15 has been transmitted to the voice data switch 16 the modem 14 and memory 15 are clear and ready to receive the next number data.

When the master caller at the master club has called a number, and the coded data relative to that number has been transmitted, the voice data switch 16 is switched to its voice transmission mode, the voice data switch 16S is simultaneously switched to the voice data mode and the caller can then call the next number selected by the random number selector 11.

On a "game" being called by a player at the master club the play is immediately stopped and the master club caller will announce, via the microphone 17, that a game has been called. This announcement will be transmitted simultaneously, via the voice data switches 16 and 16S, the master club players and to the slave club S players.

On a game being called by a player at the slave club the caller at the slave club will immediately announce that a game has been called via the microphone 17S, through preamp 18S, to the voice data switch 16S, and the announcement is broadcast at the slave club S via the voice data switch 16S transmitting the announcement signals through the amplifier 19S to the broadcasting system 20S. Simultaneously, via the voice data switch 16S and voice data switch 16, the announcement is transmitted to the amplifier 19 and speaker system 20 at the master club unit so that the announcement is made simultaneously at the both clubs.

On a "game" being called all the numbers called up to the point in that game will be displayed on the display panel 21 at the master club and the display panel 21S at the slave club and the winning card will be presented to the caller at

the winning call location.

The cord check will proceed in the conventional manner and this in one mode of operation the caller at the called game location will call the winning combination from the card over the broadcasting system to both clubs so that all the players can hear that a correct winning combination has been called. In known another mode of operation the caller at the winning location simply keys a number individual to the winning card into the card checking system 13 or 13S, the card checked system 13 will search for the stored combination of numbers relevant to that card and display the numbers for that card on the display panels 20 and 20S, generally in a different colour from the called numbers in the display panel 21 and 21S.

It will now be seen that, using the system proposed by the present invention, each called number is broadcast simultaneously to all the players at the master club and all the players at the slave club so there will be no unfair advantage to any player or group of players.

Further, as the coded information relevant to each code number is transmitted simultaneously to the display panels 21 and 21S there will be no unfair disadvantage to any player or group of players.

Further, in the event that the master caller should mis-call a number the incorrect call is heard by all the players participating in both clubs, the coded information, derived from the random number selector 11, will simultaneously display the correct number on the display panels 21 and 21S and the error can therefore be corrected, with no unfair advantage to any player or group of players.

In the above described embodiment the voice data switch 16 at the master club controls the mode of the voice data switch 16S at the slave club and this is conveniently achieved by transmitting an actuating signal from the voice data switch 16 to the voice data switch 16S, to cause the voice data switch 16S to change its mode, at the start of each transmission by the voice data switch 16 in its coded data mode

and the switch 16S can be switched from its coded data receiving mode to the voice receiving mode by a signal which follows each transmission of coded information from the voice data switch 16.

The actual time taken to transmit the coded data information is very short, only milliseconds, and therefore both voice data switches 16 and 16S will be in the voice transmission mode for the greater part of the period that the system is activated.

In the illustrated example only one slave club has been shown but it will be appreciated that any number of slave clubs, arranged in identical manner with the slave club S may be linked to the master club M by telephone connections therebetween and all the slave clubs will enjoy the same facilities as have been described for the slave club S.

Whilst the present invention has been described by way of example with reference to a specific embodiment the invention is not restricted thereto and, by way of example, the voice transmission system using the telephone lines may be independent of the coded information transmission and receiving means. Such an arrangement and other such variations and modifications will be apparent to persons skilled in the art and must lie in the scope of the present invention.

CLAIMS:

1. A link bingo arrangement in which a number is selected randomly at a master location, and is transmitted to at least one play location remote from the master location, comprising:

(a) apparatus at the master location which comprises (i) means for selecting random number, (ii) means for transmitting information orally concerning the selected number to the or each play location, (iii) means for generating a code according to the selected number, (iv) means for transmitting the code to the or each play location;

(b) apparatus at the or each play location which comprises (i) means for receiving the oral and coded signals, (ii) means for decoding the coded signal, and (iii) means for displaying the decoded signal visually.

2. A link bingo arrangement in which each random number, on being selected, is simultaneously transmitted orally to all play locations and is immediately thereafter transmitted to all play locations as a coded transmission and, at each play location, the coded location is decoded and displayed to at least the caller at each play location.

3. An arrangement as claimed in claim 1 or claim 2, in which the coded signal is an analogue signal.

4. An arrangement as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 3, in which the means for transmitting the code or the oral information comprises an interface unit for a telephone system.

5. A link bingo arrangement in which a number is selected randomly at a master location, and is transmitted to at least one play location remote from the master location, substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawing.

**Patents Act 1977**  
**Examiner's report to the Comptroller under**  
**Section 17 (The Search Report)**

Application number

9212476.7

**Relevant Technical fields**

(i) UK CI (Edition K ) A6H (H12, H2GB)

(ii) Int CI (Edition 5 ) A63F 3/06

**Databases (see over)**

(i) UK Patent Office

(ii)

Search Examiner

A T BLUNT

Date of Search

20 JULY 1992

Documents considered relevant following a search in respect of claims

1-5

Category (see over)	Identity of document and relevant passages	Relevant to claim(s)
	NONE	

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Category	Identity of document and relevant passages	Relevant to claim(s)

**Categories of documents**

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